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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 006295

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SUBJECT: AMB CRUMPTON MEETINGS WITH CRISIS MGMT CHIEF NODA  
AND VFM YACHI

Classified By: AMBASSADOR J. THOMAS SCHIEFFER. REASONS 1.4 (B),(D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Japan is making progress on the 16 items of its 2004 Counterterrorism Action Plan, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management Noda told Ambassador Henry

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Crumpton and his Australian counterpart October 24. Noda believed gaps in Japan's laws were partly a result of tensions between the American and European elements of the legal system. The government needs to educate the public on the need for new provisions, such as wiretaps. He viewed Japanese ultra-rightists and foreign groups as the greatest potential domestic terrorist threat, while North Korea posed a potential external threat. In a separate meeting, Vice Foreign Minister Yachi underscored Prime Minister Abe's keen interest in counterterrorism. Yachi also stressed said it was too early to include India in a "quadrilateral" and expressed concern about the vulnerability to terrorists of Japan's transportation system. End summary.

Crisis Management Chief Noda

¶2. (C) Ambassador Henry Crumpton, together with his Australian counterpart, Ambassador Michael Smith, discussed trilateral counterterrorism cooperation during October 24 courtesy calls on Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management Takeshi Noda and Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi. Noda affirmed the importance of coordinating closely with the United States and Australia on counterterrorism issues. Referring to Japan's 2004 Action Plan for Prevention of Terrorism, Noda told Ambassador Crumpton that Japan had already made headway on many of the 16 action items, but not all of them. For example, the goal of fully implementing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations would require the passage of new legislation before it could be achieved.

¶3. (C) Having served at the Japanese Embassy in Rome in the 1980s, during a period when over 200 people died in that country from terrorism-related causes, Noda said he recognized a certain tension between the American and European elements of the Japanese legal system for dealing with terrorism. In Japan's post-war legal system, the rules

governing investigations and arrests, and the differing functions of prosecutors and investigators, make it difficult to perform terrorism investigations. For example, in Italy, he said, hotels provide information on all foreigners staying overnight, but this sort of system does not exist in Japan. The government is pushing public health authorities to require hotels to record the passport numbers of all foreigners based on possible health contingencies, such as SARS.

¶4. (C) Japanese law does not allow for wiretaps either, Noda observed. In part, this situation reflects a lack of understanding by the Japanese public, he said, adding that the government needs to do a better job of educating its citizens if Japan is to make greater strides in counterterrorism. He hoped MOFA's Ambassador in Charge of Counterterrorism, Akio Suda, would travel extensively to other countries to gain insights to share with Japan. He noted that Japan was already working with Thailand, the Philippines, and other ASEAN countries to help improve passport control and security. He expressed an eagerness to learn additional ways that Japan could contribute to counterterrorism efforts.

¶5. (C) Domestically, Japan's greatest terrorist threats were ultra-right wing nationalist groups and certain foreign groups, Noda told Ambassador Crumpton. He thought the threat from religious groups, such as Aleph (formerly known as Aum Shinrikyo), had diminished greatly. Internationally, Noda worried most about the DPRK, which he described as unpredictable. He did not consider Islamic fundamentalists a significant threat to Japan, given the fact the Japan was not a Christian nation, or even particularly religious, but recognized that Japan, as an advanced industrialized Western,

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still faced an indirect threat.

¶6. (C) Noda briefed Ambassador Crumpton on his role as Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management, laying out his responsibility for dealing with incidents as diverse as natural disasters and transportation accidents. Formerly, the prefectures had played the lead role in crisis management, he said, but the Hanshin earthquake and sarin gas attacks of the mid-1990s had convinced the national government of the need to play a more central role in coordination. He described national crisis management efforts in Japan as multi-agency, in principle, but admitted that there were sometimes coordination problems. Ambassador Crumpton highlighted the importance of integrating domestic and external concerns, as exemplified by the multi-agency nature of the U.S. delegation to the counterterrorism trilateral.

¶7. (C) Ambassador Crumpton thanked Noda for Japan's assistance with counterterrorism efforts in the Philippines and elsewhere, and encouraged Japan to invest further in external intelligence gathering. Noda agreed on the importance of intelligence in the fight against terrorism, and recognized the need for Japan to develop greater capacity. Ambassador Crumpton also encouraged Japan to use its economic power and the rule of law in other countries to help prevent the development of safe havens for terrorists. Once the terrorists were pushed out of those countries, Ambassador Crumpton noted, Japan could assist with developing the sort of infrastructure that would prevent their return. On Afghanistan, Ambassador Crumpton noted difficulties in Japan completing its portion of the Kandahar Ring Road, and reminded Noda of the vital importance of that project to the security situation in Afghanistan.

¶8. (C) Noda expressed his appreciation for U.S. participation in the Immigration Advisory Program. While there had initially been problems in establishing jurisdiction for U.S. agents working at the airport, he thought it was very important to have them there in an advisory role. He hoped

also that by the end of the year Japan would be able to make it mandatory for airlines to provide passenger lists after takeoff, a system that has been voluntary until now.

Vice Foreign Minister Yachi

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¶9. (C) Meeting with Ambassador Crumpton later that same day, Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi said he had heard from Australian Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade Michael L'Estrange that there was interest in expanding the counterterrorism trilateral framework to include India. Yachi thought that might be possible in the future, but not yet. For one thing, he noted, India's counterterrorism concerns tended to center on Pakistan, while the current trilateral grouping focused on Southeast Asia. Adding India to the mix might confuse and change the nature of the dialogue, he said.

¶10. (C) Yachi echoed the earlier comments of Noda regarding the capacity of North Korea to conduct terrorist activities, noting his particular concern over nuclear terrorism. His other major worry was the vulnerability of Japan's transportation system. For example, the absence of security checks on the bullet train meant there was no visible deterrent to potential bombers, although Japan Rail management was confident that there were sufficient monitors in place to prevent an attack. He ended the meeting by noting that new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has a keen interest in counterterrorism issues and would continue to cooperate with the United States and Australia in providing the strong leadership that was critical to success.

¶11. (U) S/CT has cleared this message.  
SCHIEFFER